

**2-4-24 Sermon Notes      Pastor Jerome Kennedy**  
**Mark 1:29-39      “Worship Equips Us for Ministry”**

Worshipping together as a community is a very powerful thing. Our worship of God is personal because it reflects our devotion to our Creator. Our worship of God is also a community event because it brings us together as the Body of Christ. When we worship in the community, we are supporting one another, encouraging one another, and growing together in our faith. We celebrate God and make one another strong in worship. Worshipping together helps us to build greater fellowship. Worshipping together helps us to look beyond ourselves to welcome others. Worshipping together is a form of renewal.

Some people worship once a week. Other people worship every day. Someone said, “Worship is the heart poured out in gratitude and awe, expressing our appreciation of who God is and what He has done for us by His grace through Jesus Christ.” Throughout the Bible, we are encouraged to worship God. Psalm 22:3 tells us that God inhabits the praises of His people.” In Psalm 95, we are invited to , “Come worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Someone said, “Worship is like going to the filling station.” This is so true. When we go through a long, rough day, or a long hard week, and we feel we are out of gas and feeling empty, we need the strength to keep going. We don’t need to wait for Sunday, we can renew ourselves by worshipping God.

Jesus knew the power of worshipping together in community. This is why he went to the synagogue. During the days of Jesus, people gathered once a week on the Sabbath at the synagogue for worship. At the synagogue, they prayed, sang, read the scriptures, and listened to sermons just as we do today in our worship services. The only thing the people of Jesus days did not do at the synagogue was offer sacrifices on the altar. To make sacrifices, they went to the Temple in Jerusalem. The synagogue was their place of worship just as the church building is our place of worship for us today.

In the Gospel reading for today, we see that Jesus and his family went to the synagogue on the Sabbath because verse 29 tells us they were leaving the synagogue. They did not live in the synagogue. The synagogue was the place where they gathered to worship God. The real question is what happened after worship. I come to tell you today that worship allows us to praise, honor, celebrate, and adore God. Worship prepares us and equips us for ministry and service. What will worship do for us? After we leave worship,

we are expected to continue our service to God through our interaction with others. When public worship ends, we must take our faith with us into the world to be in ministry. Worship equips us to do ministry. When Jesus and the disciples left the synagogue, several things happened. When we leave the church building after worship, these are the same things God wants to happen to us.

**First, we must enter lives to be a blessing.** We are told from verses 29-31, “Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.<sup>30</sup> But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once.<sup>31</sup> So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.” Just as Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew and blessed them by healing Simon’s mother-in-law, so we must enter the lives of others and be a blessing to them. We see that when Simon’s mother-in-law was blessed with healing, she also became a blessing to Jesus and his friends by serving them.

Being a blessing means doing good to other people. It means showing kindness to others. It means serving others. It means being generous in our words to lift others. It also means being available to listen to others. In our world today, where there are so many distractions, most people just want someone to listen as they talk and not judge them.

When Jesus left the synagogue, he did not say, “Okay, that’s it until next time. No. The Bible tells us after he left the synagogue, he entered the home of Simon and Andrew and blessed them by bringing healing into their home. We can enter people’s lives and their homes and bring healing to them. Jesus told us in Luke 4 he came to heal the brokenhearted. We must also heal those who have broken hearts. We can bring healing into the homes of others but calling the, offering them a ride, taking food to them, going on walks with them, or visiting and sitting them.

When I was growing up, we used to sing a chorus that went, “Everywhere he went, he was doing good; He’s a mighty healer, he cleansed the lepers, when the crippled saw him, they started walking, everywhere he went, my Lord was doing good.”

Healing the brokenhearted by doing good is what ministry is all about. Many people feel broken. When people feel unloved and unworthy, they become broken and need healing. When people lose their jobs, their relationships, and their health, they become broken and need healing. Jesus is also known as Jehovah Rapha or God who heals. God is a healer and wants us to heal others. We can heal others with our

words; we can heal others with our presence; we can heal others through our prayers and more. Worship equips us for ministry and when we leave community worship, we must enter the lives of others to be a blessing.

**Second, we must empower lives to be beautiful.** In verses 32 to 34 we read, “At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.<sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered together at the door.<sup>34</sup> Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.”

That evening, people brought to Jesus their friends and relatives who were sick and demon-possessed, and Jesus healed them. Sickness can steal our happiness and keep us from being productive. When Jesus healed these people, he gave them their lives back. When people become sick, they feel as if their lives are being wasted. By healing them, He made them feel useful; when He healed them, he made them feel valuable and worthwhile. When He healed them, he made them feel positive about themselves.

Ministry is to empower people and make them strong. To empower people for ministry means to encourage them to use their spiritual gifts in church to the glory of God and the benefits of the saints. It means if your spiritual gift is teaching, feel free to organize a class. If your spiritual gift is prayer, invite us to a time of prayer with you and we will show up. If your spiritual gift is evangelism, we need you to help bring others to Christ. If your spiritual gift is hospitality, we invite you to make all visitors and members feel at home here among us. Let us use our spiritual gifts to empower people live beautiful lives.

When Jesus empowered people, He allowed them to become more involved in life and living. We must empower one another to become active participants in the life of the church. We said before that following Jesus is not a spectator event. It requires active participation. We want people to come to worship week after week. But just as important, we want everyone to get involved. We want you to participate in the ministries of the church. When Joshua brought down the wall of Jericho, everyone had to participate. While the army marched around the city, everyone had to exercise their faith in God to bring down the wall. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall, he got everyone involved. This is what empowerment is all about, to get everyone actively involved. Worship equips us for ministry to do just that.

### **Third, we must equip leaders to be bountiful.**

From verses 35 to 39, we are told, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.<sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him,<sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”<sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.” When the disciples found Jesus and told him everyone was looking for him, he said to them, “Let us go somewhere else to the nearby villages, so I can preach there also; this is why I came.” Jesus equipped the disciples by teaching them ministry was inclusive. Jesus did not confine himself to one area; He went everywhere there was a need.

Before the disciples found him, Jesus spent an entire night in prayer. Prayer is the best form of equipping for ministry. In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul wrote, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” When we equip each other for ministry, we will make the Body of Christ strong enough to withstand the temptations of the enemy. Worship is the place where we equip ourselves to ministry.

Once a week we gather as a community to celebrate God and encourage one another. When our time in worship ends, we are prepared to go into the worship. Worship can be seen as a filling station, a gas station, or a recharging station. Jesus worshipped with his community once a week in the synagogue. We do the same thing. When we gather to worship, it prepares us for ministry in the real world. Worship allows us to enter the lives of others to be a blessing to them, it empowers us to build lives, and it equips leaders to live beautiful lives. The Holy Spirit will help us to prepare ourselves for ministry every time we gather. May God bless us all. Amen.